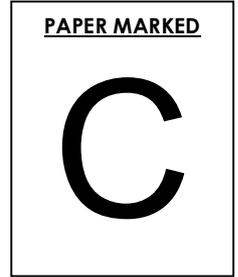


**POLICE AND CRIME
COMMISSIONER FOR
LEICESTERSHIRE**

**ETHICS, INTEGRITY AND
COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE**



Report of	OFFICE OF CHIEF CONSTABLE
Subject	RURAL CRIME
Report Date	FRIDAY 18 DECEMBER 2020 – 2:00 p.m.
Author	CI 4232 SIAN WALLS, LOCAL POLICING DIRECTORATE

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of the report is to outline how rural communities are policed, the key issues and themes arising from the policing of such communities and the associated ethical dilemmas.

Recommendations

2. The Committee is recommended to discuss and advise on the content of the report.

Ethical Dilemma

3. Should the force invest greater resource in enhancing the confidence of rural areas potentially at the detriment of other areas of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland?
4. What weight should we place on whether communities feel that we are dealing with things that matter to them locally?
5. Should we pursue seeking to increase public confidence with the same vigour as we seek to reduce crime and bring offenders to justice?

Background

6. Data collected via the Force's community on line survey, 'Neighbourhood link' suggests that
 - Rural communities have the lowest fear of crime
 - People living within rural communities are less likely to be victims of crime

- However, despite the low fear of crime and low risk of becoming a victim, rural communities have a lower level public confidence in the police. Furthermore, rural communities are less likely to feel that the police are dealing with things that matter to them locally than urban communities.
4. The committee is requested to consider:
- Should the force invest greater resource in enhancing the confidence of rural areas potentially at the detriment of other areas of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland?
 - What weight should we place on whether communities feel that we are dealing with things that matter to them locally?
 - Should we pursue seeking to increase public confidence with the same vigour as we seek to reduce crime and bring offenders to justice?
5. Further information to support these questions can be found below:

The Force Operating Model

6. The force introduced a new Target Operating Model in March this year placing significantly more front-line resources in the heart of communities. Policing in Neighbourhoods comes under the command of the Local Policing Directorate, which is headed by a Chief Superintendent.
7. The Chief Superintendent leads three Superintendents who have responsibility for the Contact Management Department, the City area and the Counties area. Each of the Superintendents has responsibility for both Neighbourhood Policing (NHP) and operational response in their areas, but each one also takes a portfolio lead for NHP or response. The portfolio for response policing sits under the Superintendent of the Counties area.
8. There are nine Neighbourhood Policing areas, four in the City and five in the Counties, with a circa 50:50 split of front-line officers, based on demand, allocated to the City and Counties. However, the geographical size of the counties is circa 1000 square miles compared with the City's 100 square miles, resulting in less visibility within the county per square mile. This highlights the conundrum of volume versus harm and that resources are allocated based on an assessment of threat, risk and harm given the finite resources available.
9. The five NPAs in the Counties have rural communities within their geographic responsibility. Each NPA is resourced by staff with responsibility for Neighbourhood and 24/7 policing who are further supported by dedicated CID officers headed by a Detective Inspector sitting underneath a crime directorate.
10. NPAs are also supported by centralised services both within the Local Policing Directorate and outside of it. Within the directorate, support is offered from a centralised firearms and liquor licensing team, a Missing persons Investigations unit, a Volunteers in Policing Unit and specialist resources working in partnerships and matters of Community Safety. Outside of the

directorate, specialist support is offered from safeguarding services, crime support services and operational support such as firearms and roads policing.

11. The rural crime lead in force is CI Sian Walls, with tactical support coming from Sgt Jo Harland at HQ and the NPA commanders. The role of the strategic lead is to set the strategic agenda for the force in relation to rural crime, wildlife crime and heritage crime. The force agenda is identified through scanning National developments, linking in with the NPCC lead on rural crime and through hearing the voice of local rural communities. The needs of the force are set out in a delivery plan which is set every performance year and monitored quarterly; it includes such issues as the numbers of trained rural crime staff in force, the training programme for rural and heritage crime, operations, weeks of action, engagement etc.
12. This performance year, tactical activity has been reduced due to the National Covid Pandemic. During a non-remarkable year, tactical activity to support the rural and farming communities would be significant and would include community events, workshops, policing operations to tackle crime, a rural crime week of action and numerous consultation events. However, despite the restrictions we have still ran a rural awareness week, established a Specials task force, which uses Special Constables to support regular officers in policing rural crime issues and ran Operation Galileo, a police operation to identify and tackle hare coursing.
13. There has also been much work on going to try and improve the confidence levels of our rural communities. Headline developments are outlined on page 4 of this report within the next section.

Body of report: Rural Confidence

14. In terms of crime and incident demand, in 2019/2020
15. 51.55% of all crime occurred within the Counties NPAs with 48.45% in the City. Recent calculations based on an assessment of 12 months of rolling crime to 27/10/20 and estimated population show that the City experiences 113.9 crimes per 1000 population and the County 59 crimes per 1000 population.
16. 54.3% of all reported incidents occurred within Counties NPAs with 45.7% City.
17. Resources have been allocated accordingly to City and County NPAs with a circa 50:50 split.
18. We continue to review and refresh our approach to Neighbourhood policing, along with our response to policing community needs and priorities. The refreshed launch of Neighbourhood Link (our online community survey tool) has provided us with the opportunity of increasing the volume of surveys with the community. To date, we have signed up 28,136 residents to Neighbourhood Link and carried out 18,679 surveys.
19. We have surveyed community concerns and replicated the questions from the crime survey of England and Wales.

20. The questions that Leicestershire police ask in surveys around public confidence are:
- Leicestershire police understands the issues that concern my local community.
 - Leicestershire police are dealing with the issues that concern my local community.
 - I feel that Leicestershire police keep me informed of things that matter to me
 - How safe do you feel in your local area (15 mins walk from house)?
 - Taking everything into account how good a job do you feel Leicestershire police are doing in your area?
21. Compared to other force areas, Harborough, Northwest and Rutland consistently show the lowest public opinion, meaning that they feel 'least satisfied' and confident in the work of the police out of all NPA areas. This is based on a scalar response of "very Satisfied" downwards to questions 1,2,3 and 5 (no free text to support the score) and the challenge for us now is to work on identifying the explicit reasons as to why communities feel the way that they do to warrant the score that they give. From the replies received to date, 227 respondents are concerned about animal thefts, 421 by farming equipment theft, 89 by heritage crime and 277 by wildlife crime. Significantly, most County NPA beats raise road safety as one of the top three concerns also.
22. When you take the results from the 'fear of crime' survey (Question 4) questions the Counties NPAs have 5 of the 6 'safest' feeling areas and the County NPAs occupy 5 of the 6 safest feeling areas.
23. The same results can be seen from MOSAIC data. MOSAIC is a public data base that classifies UK households in detail in terms of their demographics, lifestyles, preferences and behaviours. 66% of "country Living" and 62% of "Rural reality" community groups feel that Leicestershire police understand the issues of local concern. 55% of the "Country living" group feel we are dealing with the issues that affect their local communities compared to 46% of the "Rural Reality" population.
24. This tells us that those residents living in rural areas have a lower level of confidence that the police understand and are dealing with their needs compared to non-rural communities.
25. Rural crime features in the concerns raised within the survey from respondents living in rural communities but the survey contributions are often numerically weighted towards the more concentrated residential areas even on more rural beats and thus the weight of opinion is skewed towards those more populated areas and the issues raised there. As such, even beat level prioritisation will favour the ASB and Drugs issues raised in those populated areas.

26. Whilst overall the more affluent Mosaic groups are well- represented in the survey compared with the population data, the exception to this is the 'Country Living' Mosaic group who are under-represented. NPAs are working to improve the coverage in under-represented groups.
27. The conclusion that has been drawn is that lower confidence in the rural areas of Leicestershire does not come from a high fear of crime but because fewer people they feel that the police understand or prioritise local issues.
28. There is much work on going to try and improve the confidence levels of our rural communities. Headline developments include:
 - We ensured that rural crime matters were included as potential neighbourhood priorities within the local survey
 - We have included the results of our survey and subsequent neighbourhood priorities within our force strategic assessment. What this means is that issues that our rural communities identify as being important to them, such as speeding, will be given more weight in terms of our policing response.
 - We have developed our use of Neighbourhood link to communicate and report back work that we are doing in local areas. We now have 28,316 people signed up and are the 2nd highest rate in the country for two way engagement.
 - Regular consultation events, such as the recent "What Matters to you" event hosted by the OPCC and the Chief Constable.
 - The development of rural crime volunteers to assist with our resourcing levels in rural areas.
 - The development of rural crime workshops.
 - The development of farmer consultation practices at Harborough NPA.
29. In summary, it would appear our rural communities are less confident in our policing than our non-rural communities. The ethical challenge is balancing the expectations of those living in rural communities who are at lower risk of harm against those who live in more urban areas and are at greater risk of harm. With finite resources, priorities often default to risk which compounds the perception challenge of police not understanding the needs of rural communities.

Implications

Financial: None identified.

Legal: No legal implications identified

Equality Impact Assessment: Equality considerations are affected by make-up of various communities and any resourcing decision that is taken will need to assess the impact on equality issues.

Risks and Impact: Risk low, impact medium

Link to Police and Crime Plan: Reducing rural crime and keeping residents feeling safe are both outlined within the PCCs crime plan.

List of Appendices

None

Person to Contact

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